



LABIT 4 HUH
DATE 1-23-09
HB 243

Strengthening and Improving Children's Services

The Montana Children's System of Care is dependent upon the effective use of interagency collaboratives. The locus and management of services are built on interagency collaboration and grounded in a strong community base. A Kids Management Authority is a local interagency team of specific stakeholders with decision making authority at a policy level; authority to commit resources and make decisions on behalf of the agency represented. This is a collaborative effort among child welfare, education, developmental disabilities, juvenile justice, mental health agencies, and family members working under a memorandum of understanding, to coordinate services for youth with serious emotional and behavioral disorders. Kids Management Authorities are working to ensure that planning, utilization, and coordination of services, resources and supports are efficient and accountable. A KMA strives to provide an integrated care system that individualizes the needs of youth and families, coordinates cross-system funding to maximize available dollars and builds accountability into the delivery system.

About Yellowstone County KMA

This local interagency team is responsible for developing community partnerships and reviewing cases of children with multiagency service needs to ensure that all funds available and resources involved will be maximized to benefit the individual child and their family. Children with special needs are a community responsibility. Together we develop an integrated plan of care that reflects the strengths and needs of the child and family with support from all relevant agencies, family and community supports.

As provided for in 52-2-304 (3) (a), this local interagency team is facilitated in conjunction with an existing statutory team, a county interdisciplinary child information team as provided for in 52-2-211.

Melanie Redman
Project Director
Yellowstone County KMA
(406)254-7990
mredman@mt.gov

January 22, 2009

EXHIBIT _____

DATE _____

HB _____

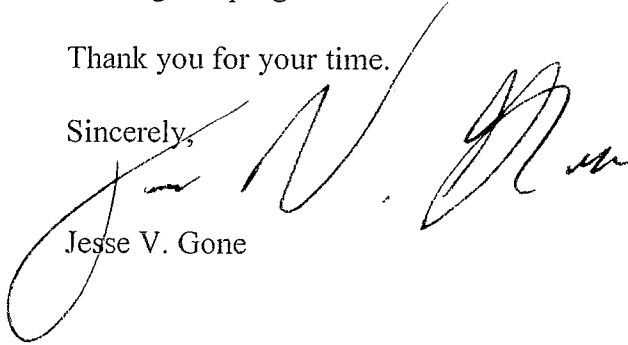
Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing to support the Montana Children's System of Care and KMA. I am a sixteen years old and I was very depressed and felt very helpless when I went to the Yellowstone County KMA meeting last summer with my mom and my case manager. I really did not want to go to a group home but I knew I had to do something different because I was so tired of the way I felt about myself and my life-I wanted to feel better. The KMA approved funding for me to stay at the group home so I could become stable and work on myself. I worked really hard and I am home now. I have learned new coping skills, communication skills and I feel good about myself now, thanks to KMA and other agencies that have helped me along the way. My mom couldn't afford to send me to a basketball camp, but the KMA paid my way to go and it was a great experience. I plan on going again next summer. The program even helped with fuel so we could go to my Grandpa's and go in the sweat bath ceremony and spend time with him. I am very thankful that the Yellowstone County KMA was there for me and I hope it will continue to be there for other kids like me who had no where else to turn for help. Please keep funding this program.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jesse V. Gone

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse V. Gone', is written over the printed name.

January 22, 2009

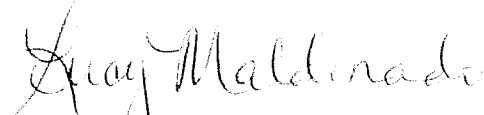
Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

I am a parent writing to support the continued development of the Montana Children's System of Care. I want to begin by telling you that the Yellowstone County KMA program saved my son's life and our family unity by providing him with funds that allowed him to live at a group home for two months. There were various professionals that were a part of the planning for the services my son so desperately needed. I was impressed with how much the committee cared about the well-being of my child. It was reassuring to me as a mother to be included and to be heard in the decisions concerning services for my son in the Billings community. It was awesome to also receive non-traditional services to attend a very important Native American traditional cultural sweat lodge ceremony that helped us spiritually to make it through a very difficult time.

I firmly believe in the KMA and its work in helping troubled kids make positive changes in their young lives to become productive and successful. I also believe it is vital to keep this program going for the benefit of our communities.

I want to also express my deepest gratitude to the committee and the legislators for the wonderful things you are doing for our children and families in Montana. Thank you so very much for funding the Yellowstone County KMA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Maldonado". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and address.

Lucy Maldonado
2614 Phyllis Lane #18
Billings, MT 59102

Charlotte Partin
920 N. 24th Street
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

I am a parent writing to support the continued development of the Montana Children's System of Care. Thanks to the services KMA has made accessible, my son has received therapy, mentoring and recreational services. Since then things have drastically improved for my son, both in school and at home.

KMA has gotten all the professionals, teachers, services providers, and their key people together for a round table gathering where we all can have optimum effect. It has brought an opportunity for the best choices to be made in my son's life. The resources that have come about have decreased power struggles and fights; his school and schoolwork have greatly improved. With KMA we are no longer a family at risk. We have been empowered to manage our lives in a better and healthier way.

I wish I could describe just how precious and appreciated each contact with KMA has been. I can tell you that with the wrap around services that KMA helped provide my son has more opportunity for success; at home, at school, and in any other situation. We have also received a tremendous amount of family support services from the Family Tree Center. Also my son has received 3 months of karate instruction to help with self discipline.

Thank you for taking this time with my letter. Your time and consideration to the matters means a lot to me and my family. Hopefully funding will continue to make such a difference in our lives.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CP' followed by a stylized flourish.

Charlotte Partin

Sally Strom
1239 Eldorado
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

I am a parent writing to support the continued development of the Montana Children's System of Care. My family and I are not on welfare and had no help finding help until we came across the Yellowstone County KMA. According to everyone we talked to in the medical department to get reduced help we made too much money. They did not consider all of the medical bills we were already paying. This left us in a tight spot because we could not afford medical treatment, even with out insurance.

Our daughter has behavioral problems; she was admitted to a drug rehab program in Wyoming. She was released early from there, they said it was more of a behavioral problem than a drug problem. We were told to get a psychiatrist to see her. So I called the Mental Health Center here in Billings thinking I could just make an appointment. Boy was I wrong. They told me I had to have her see a counselor then be referred and that could take months. I knew I did not have months to wait.

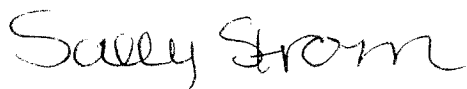
I got the Yellowstone Co. KMA number from a probation officer. They gave me some numbers to call and I got no results. So I called the KMA back and they called a psychiatric nurse and got my daughter into see the psychiatrist with in weeks. KMA also gave us the name for a family counselor. KMA funding was able to help pay for these services. A meeting was held; it included teachers and law enforcement. Together we met to try and help our daughter.

If there was no KMA program my family would have fallen through the cracks because of lack of money to get help.

I know there are a lot of families hat cannot afford to get medical help because they make to much money. Insurance does not pay for a lot of treatment; so the kids are left untreated. We need KMA here to help.

Thank you for supporting what you have done, and I hope you continue to support the children and families of Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally Strom".

Sally Strom

January 21, 2009

Dear Committee Members,

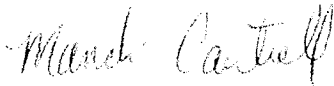
My name is Mandi, and I am a parent of a special needs child. My son, Jayden was diagnosed with Sturge-Weber Syndrome as well as ADHD, PTSD, and RAD.

Shortly after I began working with The Family Tree Center, my family advocate, Laura Booth referred me to the KMA. She explained to me that the KMA could help me access services, not just for Jadyn, but for our family too.

Within weeks we had a Child Intervention Team meeting, and while the meeting was difficult at times, I walked away knowing I was no longer alone. The members of the CIT understood that my issues with Jayden went beyond simple parenting struggles, but hinged on his mental illness and increasingly uncontrollable behavior. They helped me develop a plan that included services to help me cope with the difficult situation.

I want to take this opportunity to urge the committee members to fund Systems of Care and local KMAs in Montana. They are an invaluable service to families of children with mental illness.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mandi Cantrell". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Mandi Cantrell

Redman, Melanie

From: Corbit Harrington [charrington@co.yellowstone.mt.gov]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2009 12:51 PM

To: Redman, Melanie

Cc: Dan Schwarz; Dennis Paxinos

The Yellowstone County Attorneys Office supports House Bills 65, 66, and 243. We find our KMA to be an integral part of our community's efforts to adequately respond to the needs of at-risk children in Montana. The KMA provides the sole mechanism for our community to unite together to address the specific problems of individual children. The KMA encourages accountability of the community service providers to the community and to one another. KMA unites the efforts of social service organizations, government entities, education providers, and private practioners into one body at one time to address the needs of the child and the child's families without forcing families to retell their story a dozen times to a dozen different participants. The KMA encourages family participation by breaking down social barriers and alleviating the fears that parents have when meeting with social service providers and government officials. KMA provides the "community" so vitally necessary to help parents know that they are not alone, to assist parents in holding children accountable for their acts, and to meet the diversified needs of at-risk children with special and mental health needs. KMA needs the flexibility to address varied needs of these children and not be constrained by criteria that are too restricted and narrowly drawn by many programs. The children in Montana desperately need this community service. Please support these bills. Thank you.

Corbit Harrington
Yellowstone Deputy County Attorney



The Family Tree Center

Billings Exchange
Clubs' Child Abuse
Prevention Center



2520 5th Avenue South
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 252-9799
FAX (406) 256-3014

P.L.A.N.T.

Community Caring

Parent Education

Prevention Education

Montana Women's Prison

Parenting Program

Respite Childcare

Resource Library

Community Education

Festival of Trees



Montana Children's Trust Fund



Community Partner

Members of the Committee:

As a Family Advocate and Home Visitor with The Family Tree Center, I work with parents on a daily basis by supporting their efforts to create strong families. For many of our clients, this endeavor is made more difficult when one or more of their children suffer from mental illness. Often, the parents sit in silence, burdened by guilt and shame that they are somehow to blame for their children's sickness.

The Kids Management Authority through Systems of Care provides a valuable service to these parents. Typically, by the time parents are referred to a program that is part of Systems of Care, they have been told by so many other people that their child is just "bad", or they are "weak" parents. When they have the opportunity to attend their first meeting they are amazed by a process that, not only supports their efforts, but provides resources for the entire family structured on the strengths they already have in place.

The relief I see in their eyes when I am able to refer a family to the KMA, and more so following a Child Intervention Team meeting, is all the evidence I need to believe that this is an integral part of our network of support in the community. Funding for the Systems of Care bills must be maintained so these parents do not lose access to programs such as the KMA.

Sincerely,

Sara Schantz

Family Advocate, The Family Tree Center



Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain, Inc.

*We create solutions that change lives for people with disabilities,
for the disadvantaged and for their families.*

Adult Day Services
Great Falls, MT

Autism Services
Billings, MT
Boise, ID
Salt Lake City, UT

Career Designs
Great Falls, MT

Case Management Services
Gillette, WY
Great Falls, MT
Nampa, ID
Sheridan, WY

Child Development Center
Missoula, MT

Community Access
Great Falls, MT
Sheridan, WY

Goodwill Staffing Services
Boise, ID
Nampa, ID

Goodwill Stores
Billings, MT
Boise, ID
Butte, MT
Great Falls, MT
Helena, MT
Meridian, ID
Missoula, MT
Nampa, ID
Pocatello, ID

Highlands Hospice
Butte, MT
Deer Lodge, MT

Home Care Services
Butte, MT
Conrad, MT
Great Falls, MT

Idaho Clinical Services
Boise, ID
Nampa, ID

Medallion Medical Care
Great Falls, MT

OutSources Unlimited
Great Falls, MT

The MailRoom
Great Falls, MT

Regional Service Center
Great Falls, MT

Supported Living
Great Falls, MT
Sheridan, WY

Supported Employment
Great Falls, MT
Sheridan, WY

WorkForce Development Ctr.
Great Falls, MT

Working Solutions
Nampa, ID

January 21, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

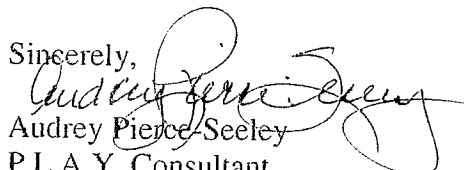
My name is Audrey Pierce-Seeley and I am a P.L.A.Y. (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) Consultant with Easter Seals-Goodwill. Easter Seals-Goodwill has been offering this intervention for children aged fourteen months through six years of age for two years in the Billings, Hardin, Bozeman, Helena and Butte areas. The P.L.A.Y. Project intervention is provided in the home and teaches the parents/caregivers to be their child's best PLAY partner. The PLAY strategies empower a parent to work on helping their child communicate, engage and be in loving relationships with those that care for them. The skills the parents learn and the progress the child makes are life long.

The P.L.A.Y. Project is a fee for service. The cost cannot currently be reimbursed by health insurance. The cost is a mere \$3,500.00 per year (as opposed to some Autism interventions that can cost up to \$40,000.00 per year). As you can imagine not all families find it affordable. The KMA system of collaborating to meet the needs of families has made these services possible for families. They have been able to partially fund five families in Billings, one in Great Falls and one in Bozeman.

When a child receives a diagnosis of Autism the parent is told early intervention is the best path to progress. Parents are desperate to find, implement and pay for services. They are often put on wait lists and left feeling unsupported with no place to turn. KMA is able to help these families address the parent stress of immediate need for services by bringing a variety of service providers (therapists, teachers, counselors, etc...) to the table to help the parent gather information and coordinate community services that will best meet the individual needs of their child with special needs and their circle of family.

The Billings KMA interagency team meetings are insightful and helpful for discovering and coordinating a variety of services for unmet needs of families. I have been invited to attend these community meetings and each and every time I have discovered a way to meet a need for a family challenged with the diagnosis of Autism. Please keep this Montana children's System of Care alive and well funded.

Sincerely,


Audrey Pierce-Seeley
P.L.A.Y. Consultant

Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain
406-252-9600

January 22, 2009

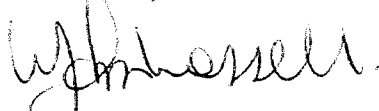
Dear Committee Members:

We are providers and Supervisors of Targeted Youth Case Management Services for Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch Community Based Services. We are writing in care and support of the Montana Children's System of Care. The local Yellowstone County KMA has been a valued resource that provides a forum for families, providers and agencies to come together to address and develop a plan to best meet the needs of the referred children and families. At times traditional medicaid covered services are not adequate or successful for a particular youth/family. The KMA allows an opportunity to explore alternatives that may not otherwise be available to a family. The KMA collaboratively works to develop care plans, establish funding for and link the family to additional supports that are not Medicaid funded.

The KMA provides much benefit to the children and families served within the Youth Case Management Program at Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch Community Based Services and thus is utilized and referred to often. The interagency collaboration of the KMA promotes more thorough assessment and planning for children and families. As a provider of services it has been reassuring and encouraging to know that we have a forum to be able to bring to the table difficult cases in which additional support and brainstorming is necessary to be able to effectively support and assist children and families. Encouraging and also much appreciated is the clinical and financial efficiencies that the KMA process brings to the table for troubled Montana youth. The KMA provides a forum of hope, encouragement and opportunity to children and families served.

Thank You to Committee Members and Legislators for continued support of the KMA as well as efforts being made to continue to support the children and families of Montana.

Thank You,



John Wessell, LCPC
YCM Clinical Supervisor
Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch
Community Based Services



Laura Narum
YCM Staff Supervisor
Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch
Community Based Services